CLAIMS

1. A method comprising:

receiving an indication of a collaborative electronic mail message that includes a portion for feedback from one or more recipients;

displaying an identifier of the collaborative electronic mail message for viewing by a user, and

accepting commands, made available by an electronic mail program for manipulating other electronic mail messages, to manipulate the collaborative electronic mail message.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the commands to manipulate the collaborative electronic mail message include a reply command.

3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the commands to manipulate the collaborative electronic mail message include a forward command.

4. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the commands to manipulate the collaborative electronic mail message include a delete command.

5. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the commands to manipulate the collaborative electronic mail message include a flag for follow-up command.

6.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the indication comprises the collaborative electronic mail message.

7.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the identifier includes a subject of the collaborative electronic mail message and an author of the collaborative electronic mail message.

8.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the identifier includes a size of the collaborative electronic mail message, including all of the content of the collaborative electronic mail message.

9.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the collaborative electronic mail message further includes a graph of responses to the collaborative electronic mail message.

10.   A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising:

receiving a user selection of a portion of the graph; and

indicating which of a plurality of comments in the portion for feedback correspond to the selected portion of the graph.

11.   A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the user selection comprises positioning of a cursor over the portion of the graph.

12. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the portion of the graph comprises a bar of a bar graph.

13. A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising:

receiving a user selection of a portion of the graph; and

indicating which of the one or more recipients corresponds to the portion of the graph.

14. A method as recited in claim 13, wherein a recipient corresponds to the portion of the graph if the recipient's response to the collaborative electronic mail message is reflected in the portion.

15. A method as recited in claim 13, wherein indicating which of the one or more recipients corresponds to the portion of the graph comprises displaying which of the one or more recipients corresponds to the portion in a box separate from the collaborative electronic mail message.

16. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

comparing a time identified in the collaborative electronic mail message with an electronic calendar corresponding to the user;

determining whether a conflict exists between the time identified in the collaborative electronic mail message and a pre-existing commitment in the electronic calendar; and

if a conflict exists, then displaying an indication of the conflict.

17. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

comparing a time identified in the collaborative electronic mail message with an electronic task list corresponding to the user;

determining whether a conflict exists between the time identified in the collaborative electronic mail message and a pre-existing task in the electronic task list; and

if a conflict exists, then displaying an indication of the conflict.

18. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

changing the identifier when the collaborative electronic mail message is opened by the user;

receiving an indication that the collaborative electronic mail message has been modified; and

changing the identifier again to visually indicate that the collaborative electronic mail message has been modified.

19. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

waiting until an opportune time to display the identifier.

20. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

including, in the identifier, an indication of an author of the collaborative electronic mail message.

21. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 1.

22. A system comprising:

a calendar component that maintains a record of appointments scheduled for a user; and

an electronic mail component, communicatively coupled to the calendar component, that presents both collaborative electronic mail messages and other electronic mail messages to a user, and that also identifies conflicts between appointments identified in the collaborative electronic mail messages and the appointments scheduled for the user.

23. A system as recited in claim 22, wherein the collaborative electronic mail messages include a new collaborative electronic mail message being authored at the system.

24. A system as recited in claim 22, wherein the collaborative electronic mail messages include a collaborative electronic mail message received from another system.

25. A system as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

a task manager component, communicatively coupled to the electronic mail component, that maintains an electronic task list; and

wherein the electronic mail component further identifies conflicts between appointments identified in the collaborative electronic mail message and tasks in the electronic task list.

26.   A system as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

a contact manager component, communicatively coupled to the electronic mail component, that maintains a set of electronic mail addresses; and

wherein the electronic mail component further accesses the set of electronic mail addresses to identify electronic mail addresses of recipients identified by the user.

27.   One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

displaying a plurality of user-selectable options for control of electronic mail messages;

allowing the plurality of user-selectable options to also control collaborative electronic mail messages.

28.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the plurality of user-selectable options includes a message reply option.

29.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the plurality of user-selectable options includes a message forward option.

30. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the plurality of user-selectable options includes a create new message option.

31. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including accessing, during creation of a new collaborative electronic mail message, an electronic contact list to identify an electronic mail address for a recipient of the collaborative electronic mail message.

32. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

displaying a user-selectable reminder option; and

sending, in response to selection of the reminder option, a reminder of a previously sent collaborative electronic mail message to one or more recipients of the previously sent collaborative electronic mail message.

33. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

displaying a user-selectable summary option; and

in response to selection of the summary option, sending a summary, to one or more recipients of the previously sent collaborative electronic mail message, of responses received to a previously sent collaborative electronic mail message.

34. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

accessing an electronic calendar maintained by a task manager component; and

identifying conflicts between times included in the collaborative electronic mail messages and commitments in the electronic calendar.

35. One or more computer-readable media as recited in 34, wherein the identifying comprises identifying conflicts between commitments in the electronic calendar and collaborative electronic mail messages being authored at the computer as well as collaborative electronic mail messages received at the computer.

36. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

identifying, to an author of a collaborative electronic mail message at the computer, how many recipients have not yet opened the collaborative electronic mail message; and

identifying, to the author, how many recipients have responded to the collaborative electronic mail message.

37.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 36, further comprising identifying, to the author, how many recipients have opened but not responded to the collaborative electronic mail message.

38.   A method comprising:

displaying, in an electronic mailbox, an identifier of a collaborative electronic mail message;

changing the identifier when the collaborative electronic mail message is opened by a user;

receiving an indication that the collaborative electronic mail message has been modified; and

changing the identifier again to visually indicate that the collaborative electronic mail message has been modified.

39.   A method as recited in claim 38, wherein the identifier includes a subject of the collaborative electronic mail message and an author of the collaborative electronic mail message.

40.   A method as recited in claim 38, wherein changing the identifier when the collaborative electronic mail message is opened by a user comprises changing the identifier from a boldface format to a non-boldface format.

41.   A method as recited in claim 38, wherein changing the identifier again comprises changing the identifier to a boldface format.

42.   One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 38.

43.   One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

displaying, in an electronic mailbox, a single identifier corresponding to a collaborative electronic mail message regardless of a number of replies to the collaborative electronic mail message that are received.

44.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 43, wherein the single identifier includes one or more of: a collaborative electronic mail message icon, an author, a subject, and a timestamp.

45.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 43, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

changing how the single identifier is displayed based at least in part on whether the collaborative electronic mail message has been opened and whether a modification to the collaborative electronic mail message has been received since opening the collaborative electronic mail message.

46. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 45, wherein the changing comprises displaying the single identifier in a boldface style if the collaborative electronic mail message has not been opened or if a modification to the collaborative electronic mail message has been received since the collaborative electronic mail message was last opened, and otherwise displaying the single identifier in a non-boldface style.

47. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 43, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

accepting commands, made available by an electronic mail program for manipulating other electronic mail messages, to manipulate the collaborative electronic mail message.

48. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 47, wherein the commands include one or more of: forwarding a message, replying to a message, and deleting a message.

49. A method comprising:

receiving an indication that a collaborative electronic mail message has been modified; and

waiting until an opportune time to display a notification that the collaborative electronic mail message has been modified.

50. A method as recited in claim 49, further comprising determining the opportune time to display the notification based at least in part on the importance of a topic of the collaborative electronic mail message to a user that is to receive the notification.

51. A method as recited in claim 49, further comprising determining the opportune time to display the notification based at least in part on the identity of the author of the collaborative electronic mail message.

52. A method as recited in claim 49, further comprising determining the opportune time to display the notification based at least in part on the identity of a recipient that modified the collaborative electronic mail message.

53. A method as recited in claim 49, further comprising determining the opportune time to display the notification based at least in part on what a user that is to receive the notification is working on.

54. A method as recited in claim 49, further comprising determining the opportune time to display the notification based at least in part on how busy a user that is to receive the notification is.

55. A method as recited in claim 49, further comprising:

receiving an indication of a new collaborative electronic mail message;

waiting until an opportune time to display a notification of the new collaborative electronic mail message.

56. A method as recited in claim 49, wherein the notification comprises an identifier of the collaborative electronic mail message.

57. A method as recited in claim 56, wherein the identifier of the collaborative electronic mail message includes both an indication of a subject of the collaborative electronic mail message and an indication of an author of the collaborative electronic mail message.

58. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 49.

59. One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

receiving an indication of a message that includes a reply to a collaborative electronic mail message; and

determining when a notification of the reply should be displayed.

60. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 59, wherein the determining comprises determining when the notification should be displayed based at least in part on the importance of a topic of the collaborative electronic mail message to a user that is to receive the notification.

61. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 59, wherein the determining comprises determining when the notification should be displayed based at least in part on the identity of the author of the collaborative electronic mail message.

62. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 59, wherein the determining comprises determining when the notification should be displayed based at least in part on the identity of a recipient that modified the collaborative electronic mail message.

63. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 59, wherein the determining comprises determining when the notification should be displayed based at least in part on what a user that is to receive the notification is working on.

64. A method comprising:

receiving an indication of a collaborative electronic mail message; and

displaying a notification of the collaborative electronic mail message, the notification identifying an author of the collaborative electronic mail message as a source of the collaborative electronic mail message.

65. A method as recited in claim 64, wherein the collaborative electronic mail message is a new collaborative electronic mail message.

66. A method as recited in claim 64, wherein the collaborative electronic mail message is a reply to a previously created collaborative electronic mail message.

67. A method as recited in claim 64, further comprising displaying, as the notification, a subject of the collaborative electronic mail message and a size of the collaborative electronic mail message, wherein the size of the collaborative electronic mail message includes all of the content of the collaborative electronic mail message.

68. A method as recited in claim 64, wherein the indication comprises an identifier of the author, a subject of the collaborative electronic mail message and a size of the collaborative electronic mail message, wherein the size of the collaborative electronic mail message includes all of the content of the collaborative electronic mail message.

69. A method as recited in claim 64, wherein the indicator comprises the collaborative electronic mail message.

70. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 64.

71. A method comprising:

identifying, to an author of a collaborative electronic mail message, how many recipients have not yet opened the collaborative electronic mail message; and

identifying, to the author, how many recipients have responded to the collaborative electronic mail message.

72. A method as recited in claim 71, further comprising identifying, to the author, how many recipients have opened but not responded to the collaborative electronic mail message.

73. A method as recited in claim 71, further comprising including both the indication of how many recipients have not yet opened the collaborative electronic mail message and the indication of how many recipients have responded to the collaborative electronic mail message in a single dialog box of a user interface.

74. A method as recited in claim 71, further comprising including both the indication of how many recipients have not yet opened the collaborative electronic mail message and the indication of how many recipients have responded to the collaborative electronic mail message in a single button of a user interface.

75. A method as recited in claim 71, wherein the identifying how many recipients have not yet opened the collaborative electronic mail message comprises displaying a first icon to represent a recipient that has not yet opened the collaborative electronic mail message, and wherein the identifying how many recipients have responded to the collaborative electronic mail message comprises displaying a second icon to represent a recipient that has responded to the collaborative electronic mail messages.

76. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 71.